

Connections

February 2009

Traffic Fatalities Reduced for Third Straight Year

For the third straight year, precious lives were saved from traffic crashes on Missouri roads. Preliminary fatality reports show a continuing downward trend from 2005 to 2008 due to the combined efforts of highway safety advocates in the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety.

According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol, highway fatalities decreased five percent in 2008 for a 27 percent decrease in fatalities over the past three years.

“If the current reduction in traffic fatalities continues over the next few years, we will be on track to meet our goal of 850 traffic fatalities by 2012,” said Leanna Depue, chair for the coalition’s executive committee. “We’d ultimately like that number to be zero, but a third straight year of reducing fatalities is a step in the right direction.”

In 2007, Missouri recorded fewer than 1,000 fatalities for the first time in more than 15 years. This allowed the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety to meet an ambitious goal one year early with traffic fatalities falling to less than 1,000, at 992. In October 2008, the Missouri Coalition

continued on page 4



Cathy Morrison

The photo collage above depicts the three strategies we believe are helping reduce the number of fatalities on Missouri highways. Those strategies include educational activities, like the Battle of the Belt program and other targeted community activities; increased law enforcement efforts by the Highway Patrol and other safety partners; and engineering improvements such as rumble stripes and the installation of more than 500 miles of median guard cable.

MoDOT Employees Set Record for Charitable Donations

by Kristi Jamison

We did it again! For the second year in a row, MoDOT employees gave more in charitable contributions than their counterparts in all other state agencies during the annual Missouri State Employees Charitable Campaign, and we did it in record-setting fashion. Our \$192,297 donation was the most money ever contributed by a single state agency in the history of the campaign.

“For two years running, MoDOT employees have proven to be the most caring and generous in Missouri state government,” said Stacy Kaiser and Jackie Biele, co-

chairs of MoDOT’s Charitable Campaign. “It takes a lot of hard work to plan the charitable campaign each year, but the phenomenal response by our co-workers and the fact that hundreds of people will benefit from these donations make every minute worth it.”

MoDOT donations during the 2009 campaign increased 16 percent over donations given last year.

It was also a banner year for the “Show Me You Care” campaign as a whole. State employees contributed a total of

\$1,152,844, the largest amount raised in the campaign’s 24-year history.

Stacy Kaiser and Jackie Biele were joined by Director Pete Rahn and Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioners Duane Michie, Jim Anderson, Mike Kehoe, David Gach, Grace Nichols and Rudy Farber at a ceremony Jan. 8 in the governor’s office lauding the success of this year’s campaign.



Cathy Morrison

Director Pete Rahn and MoDOT’s Charitable Campaign Co-chairs Stacy Kaiser and Jackie Biele present a campaign check to then-Gov. Matt Blunt.

Inside

6



Take a Stand
A little red Corvette delivers a powerful message in District 1

7



How Low Can You Go
District 2 records lowest number of incidents departmentwide in 2008

10



Friendly Faces
District 5 introduces new Customer Service representatives

11



Commanding Performance
I-64 Team smooths the transition to Phase Two

15



In the Know
Community briefings educate Southeast Missourians about Safe & Sound

MoDOT Makes Push to Sell Property It No Longer Needs

by Sally Oxenhandler

In an effort to put more money into road and bridge projects, we're taking an aggressive approach to selling property we no longer need. Under our new Realty to Roads initiative, we have contracted with two private firms for real estate marketing and consulting services.

We acquire land to build, improve and maintain the highway system. As the transportation system evolves, some land becomes excess. White & Associ-

ates and Richard C. Shepard, Real Estate Strategies will help us sell selected parcels of excess land that range in size from less than an acre to 160 acres. An initial list of excess property for sale can be found at www.modot.org.

"We want to provide the best value we can to Missouri taxpayers by selling our excess property and using the proceeds for highway improvements," said Kelly Lucas, director of MoDOT's Right of Way Division. "Our Realty to

Roads program will help us manage the property we own more effectively and efficiently."

Lucas said the land for sale could be assembled with adjoining properties

or in some cases be developed independently. In fiscal year 2008, the agency sold 112 properties at a value of more than \$4.4 million. The receipts were added to MoDOT's budget for road and bridge projects.



Move It: MoDOT Reminds Drivers of Traffic Law

by Sally Oxenhandler

If you're involved in a minor traffic crash, one of the first thoughts you might have is whether or not you should move your vehicle. The answer is yes.

A state law that took effect 10 years ago requires vehicles involved in minor, non-injury crashes to move off the road. MoDOT is using the 10-year anniversary to remind motorists to "steer it and clear it" to ensure minor traffic crashes don't turn into major pileups. The agency is also putting up signs in the St. Louis and Kansas City areas with the "steer it and clear it" message.

"If you're involved in a minor traffic crash and there aren't any injuries, you need to move your vehicle onto the shoulder or other nearby location off of the roadway," Director Pete Rahn said. "Every minute a vehicle stops on the freeway

and blocks one lane of traffic, it backs up approaching traffic for four minutes."

Rahn said the law - known as the "Move It" law - also helps reduce the chance of motorists being involved

STEER IT-CLEAR IT
NON-INJURY
CRASHES
MOVE VEHICLES
OFF ROADWAY
IT'S THE LAW

in secondary crashes, which cause 18 percent of fatalities in Missouri.

Safe & Sound is Moving Right Along

Since the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission approved the Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Plan in September, the massive project to repair or replace 802 of the state's worst bridges has been moving forward at a steady pace.

In December, MoDOT short-listed three teams to compete for the contract to replace 554 bridges in the plan. Those teams are Missouri Bridge Builders, KTU Constructors, and Bridges Across Missouri Team. Each group includes companies with a blend of local, national and international reputations, as well as considerable design-build experience. Once the procurement process is complete, MoDOT expects to select one of these teams in May.

Meanwhile, the Commission awarded 35 Safe & Sound bridge projects at its January meeting. That brings to 50 the total number of bridge projects under contract as part of Safe & Sound.

"We're pleased that within just a few months of launching the Safe & Sound program in September we are able to move ahead with 50 important bridge projects," Director Pete Rahn said. "Missourians have told us they want

their bridges fixed, and we're working to deliver those improvements as quickly as possible."

The 50 bridges now under contract are all rehabilitation projects, and at least 50 more will be put out for bids in the coming months.

A complete list of all the bridges in the Safe & Sound program and other information can be found on the MoDOT Web site at www.modot.org/safeand-sound.



Signs like the one above mark each bridge that is a part of the Safe & Sound program.

Cathy Morrison

Register Now!

The 99th Annual TEAM Conference is coming up soon. Register online now to attend the transportation engineer's networking event of the year on March 17-19 at the Branson Convention Center, the Hilton Branson Convention Center Hotel and the Hilton Promenade at Branson Landing.

The conference will once again be packed with informative workshops, quality breakout sessions and exciting tours to several Branson- and Springfield-area attractions. Featured speakers include Marcus Engel and Tripp Frohlichstein. Plus, there will be a fun walk/run, networking opportunities in the

large exhibit hall and more options for kids and spouses than ever before.

The conference rate is \$100 through Feb. 6 or \$125 if you register between Feb. 7 and March 6. Registration on site is \$150. Most technical tours and workshops are \$50 for a half day or \$80 for a whole day.

To register or get more information on tour options, breakout sessions, workshop topics and more, go to the Team Web site at www.modot.org/team.



A Japanese delegation visited the MoDOT Central Office in November to learn more about how we planned to fix and maintain 802 bridges.

Cathy Morrison

Five Things You Can Tell Your Neighbor About a Primary Safety Belt Law

Strengthening Missouri’s safety belt law is MoDOT’s top priority for 2009. Want to get involved? Sign up as a Primary Safety Belt partner at saveMOLives.com. Want to get your family and friends involved? Here are five things you can tell them about a primary safety belt law.

1. Of more than 500 traffic laws in Missouri, the safety belt law is the only one that has a secondary enforcement provision – a driver must break another law first before they can be cited for a safety belt violation.

2. Strengthening the current law would save 90 lives and prevent
- 1,000 serious injuries in Missouri each year, at no cost to taxpayers.

3. One of the safest actions a person can take on the road is to buckle up – it’s a motorist’s single best defense in a traffic crash.

4. A 2008 survey shows that 76 percent of Missourian’s buckle up – well below the national average of 83 percent.

5. Amending the current law will provide at least \$16 million in a one-time federal incentive grant to use for safety enforcement, education and engineering.

Unbuckled

7 out of 10 Missourians killed in traffic crashes are unbuckled.

Save 90 lives in '09
with a primary seat belt law.

ARRIVE ALIVE
saveMOLives.com



Transportation Day Kicks Off District Tours

Primary Safety Belt, Conversation Will Be Focus

by Sally Oxenhandler

For the first time in five years, there will be no State of Transportation Address to Missouri legislators. Director Pete Rahn delivered the fifth and final State of Transportation address Feb. 6, 2008. The law authorizing the annual speech contained a five-year sunset clause, which legislators did not extend.

Although there will be no formal speech, we will still host a Transportation Day at the Capitol on Feb. 4 to inform elected officials about what’s going on in transportation and where their help is needed. Transportation Day will also launch a series of tours to the districts by Director Rahn.

“The State of Transportation Address provided a key opportunity for us to talk to legislators about our recent achievements and our future goals and challenges,” said Governmental Relations Director Jay Wunderlich. “Transportation Day will help us build on the momentum created by the speech and inform our elected officials about vital transportation issues.”

Activities planned for Transportation Day at the Capitol include safety displays, legislative visits and a news conference featuring Director Rahn, Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission members and legislators.

Transportation Day and the tours will focus on our top priority for 2009 – amending the state’s current safety belt law to allow for primary enforcement. Other topics of discussion will include the federal economic stimulus package and how it will affect Missouri. Rahn will also use the visits as an opportunity to talk about A Conversation for Moving Missouri Forward – MoDOT’s discussion with Missourians about the future of transportation in our state.

The tours will begin Feb. 5 in Hannibal and conclude April 8 in Kirksville. Director Rahn will try to meet with as many employees as possible during the visits.



Cathy Morrison

Then and Now



Then, all hand-drawn plan sheets, lettering and notes were drafted by hand using instruments such as traingles, T-squares and engineer scales. Designers used data collected by surveyors in the field and delivered manually.



Now, design squads generate plans for roadway projects on computers using software programs like MicroStation and GEOPAK. The data provided by surveyors is now collected and delivered electronically.

Inside Minute

Community Relations has launched a new tool to help keep you informed about internal MoDOT news and information.

The “Inside Minute” is a one-minute webcast just for MoDOT employees. It features Community Relations Coordinator Laura Holloway, pictured below, as the news anchor in a format similar to the “MoDOT Minute,” our external webcast.

A new Inside Minute will be posted to MoDOT’s Intranet site – wwwwi/intranet/ – every Tuesday. You will receive a link through the “users” e-mail group as a reminder that new information is available or to revisit archived webcasts.

The Inside Minute joins several social media tools the Community Relations staff has implemented recently, including blogs, podcasts, a Facebook place, YouTube videos and more.



Reduced Fatalities

continued from page 1

for Roadway Safety announced a new goal for traffic fatality reductions at 850 or less by 2012. The last time Missouri reached less than 850 fatalities was 1949.

One of the top strategies for meeting the new goal is strengthening Missouri’s seat belt law to allow for primary enforcement. Unfortunately, early reports show that 479 of the people killed in traffic crashes in 2008 were not wearing their seat belts. A 2008 survey reported only 76 percent of Missourians are buckling up. The state’s rate has been at a plateau since 2004 and remains consistently below the national average of 83 percent. In the past three years, nearly seven out of 10 vehicle occupants killed in Missouri traffic crashes were not wearing their seat belt.

“Your seatbelt is your lifeline and your single best defense in any traffic crash,” said Depue. “A primary seat belt law in Missouri would increase the usage rate saving 90 lives and preventing 1,000 serious injuries in the first year it goes into effect.”

Of more than 500 Missouri traffic laws, the current safety belt law is the only one that has a secondary enforcement provision - a driver must be stopped for another reason before they can be cited for a safety belt violation.

Other measures aimed at decreasing fatalities and serious injuries include continued improvements in engineering, law enforcement and public education.

For more information visit savemolives.com. Buckle Up to Arrive Alive.

February Service Anniversaries

4

35 Years		Marilyn L. Herndon	D8
Gary H. Owens	D1	Jacqueline S. Rogers	CO
30 Years		Larry E. Schepерle	CO
Michael R. Thomas	D4	10 Years	
Alexander J. Holterman	D5	James E. Defreece	D1
Bradley D. Hartman	D6	James E. Gottman	D3
Anthony J. Farley	D8	Danny W. Perry	D3
25 Years		Jason I. Walton	D3
Scott D. Humphrey	D4	Helen C. Madison	D4
Bentley C. Woods	D5	Timothy K. Taylor	D4
Alan L. Trampe	D5	Steven R. Reedy	D4
James R. Susnic	D6	Marsha D. Tarrant	D7
Joe W. Jackson	D10	Marvin M. Morris	D7
20 Years		Tommy L. Nunn	D8
Johnny D. Grigsby	D1	Paul E. Hilchen	CO
Andrew S. Thompson	D2	Normalee A. Schulte	CO
Kevin L. Ross	D2	5 Years	
Billy J. Buesing	D4	Matthew K. Johnson	D1
Brian K. Goodall	D4	Raymond E. Arbogast	D2
Michael K. Jones	D4	Scott L. Wasson	D3
Randy S. Morris	CO	William R. Meyers	D3
15 Years		Craig T. Skorseth	D4
Michael D. Powell	D1	Kevin W. Cook	D4
Kristin E. Buczek	D1	Harrison A. Cato	D4
Darin L. Biegel	D2	Darren L. Phillips	D4
Jeffrey D. Poor	D3	Corey M. Hansen	D4
Jon G. Voss	D4	Betherny J. Williams	D6
Jason T. Lackman	D5	Michael E. Blattner	D6
Ronald E. Plaster	D8	Matthew F. Keim	D6
		Cody W. Stice	D8

Brandon W. Henson	D8	Charles W. Carter	D10
Kelly L. Shipman	D8	Thomas C. White	D10
Nicholas D. Richmond	D9	Ashley D. Burnett	CO
Will R. Atkinson	D9	Nora L. Stewart	CO
Edward A. Graham II	D10	Ray Wood	CO
Michael L. Terrett	D10		
Gary A. Keeton	D10		

In Memoriam

Retirees					
Leon Payne	D5	Nov. 25	Carl David “Butz” Perry	CO	Dec. 19
Durward W. Rasco	D1	Nov. 30	J.C. Clayton	D6	Dec. 19
Billy J. Gibson	D9	Dec. 3	Clayborne J. Cash	D3	Dec. 20
Joseph H. Nation	D6	Dec. 3	Freddie B. Miller	D5	Dec. 21
Earl R. Griffin	D3	Dec. 5	Cecil E. Jones	D7	Dec. 23
Harold F. Sumpter	D6	Dec. 7	Elman W. Gibbs	D10	Dec. 25
Walter E. Sadler	D9	Dec. 9	Bobbie G. Dake	D5	Dec. 26
Howard N. Glines	D6	Dec. 9	Glenn E. Korte	D5	Dec. 26
Jim D. Strait	D7	Dec. 13	Thomas J. Bell	D4	Dec. 27
Windell P. Bryan	D6	Dec. 16	Herman “Hilton” Plank	D9	Dec. 31

December Retirements

Name	Location	Years of Service		
Ronald Rhoades	D1	9	Mary Payton	D7 13
Mary Bax	D5	20	David Austin	CO 25
Jeanette Brockman	D5	12		



Location, Location, Location
Central Office Mail Center is Relocating

In an effort to improve efficiency and decrease costs, General Services will be relocating the Mail Center from 1320 Creek Trail Drive to the ground floor at 105 W. Capitol Avenue.

During the transition period, parcels will continue to be received at Creek Trail. However, it's important for you to notify the customers and vendors you work with about this change so they can avoid unexpected costs and delays because there are fees for re-routing packages.

The additional charge for re-routing parcels is \$5 for ground and \$10 for overnight. This charge is passed on to the person who sent the parcel. If a

parcel has to be re-routed, the delivery company will provide the sender with a copy of our new address along with the additional charge. At this point, it is important to be proactive by giving all partners ample notice about of the upcoming address change so they can avoid extra charges.

The new address is: Mail Center, 105 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101

The new address pertains to incoming parcels ONLY (UPS, FedEx, DHL, etc.) where an actual street address is needed for delivery. Regular United States Postal mail is sent to a Post Office Box so there will be no change



Although staff won't move in until later this month, Senior Mail Center Operator Bill Haselhorst is already taking advantage of the space. The Mail Center will be located on the ground floor of the Headquarters building near the Print Shop.

necessary for regular mail. Only packages, parcels, or any other items mailed to a street address will be affected by this change.

Thanks for your cooperation in this matter. Additional information will be provided as the time approaches for the move. In the meantime, if you have questions, concerns or comments, contact Warren Blanchard at 573-526-2529 or Jeannie Wilson at 573-526-1199.

20 Years of Value Engineering



The concept of Value Engineering originated at General Electric during World War II to effectively deal with shortages of raw materials and skilled labor, and it's been around at MoDOT for 20 years – saving Missouri taxpayers nearly \$450 million in project costs.

But with MoDOT's recent focus on Practical Design and radical cost control measures, VE has taken on a new realm of applications and emphasis.

There are three founding precepts of Value Engineering: identifying basic functions that must be achieved, multi-discipline team approach and creative brainstorming.

“VE has become an integral part of the transportation industry,” said Tom Allen, Value Engineering coordinator for MoDOT. “As federal, state and local governments strive to obtain the best value for taxpayers, VE is a constant source of innovation, cost effectiveness and quality improvements.”

Allen said dramatic evolution has occurred on the construction side with

change proposals. Originally, VE Change Proposals identified saving opportunities. If approved, these savings were split 50-50 between the contractor and MoDOT. Now, MoDOT has a second type of VECP called a VE/Practical Design Underrun, known as a VE/PDU. The VE/PDU gives contractors the opportunity to gain from practical suggestions on existing features.

“If a contractor identifies that something does not need to be constructed, or if something can be used in its place, and MoDOT agrees, then we will share 25 percent of the savings with the contractor,” Allen explained. “MoDOT is also sharing in the redesign costs of VECP changes.”

Some other new things for Value Engineering include the “2-Hour VE.” MoDOT personnel are currently working on a form that will lead someone through the VE process in two hours. This is geared towards a portion of a project or a process that needs a quick look, but still captures and documents the information needed to report it as a VE study in Tracker and the annual VE report to FHWA.

Another new item is called the “post letting VE.” One Resident Engineer office had identified some Value Engineering

The Five Types of Value Engineering Studies

With MoDOT's current emphasis on Practical Design, Value Engineering strategy and tactics have dramatically evolved to adapt to the new environment. In the past, VE studies were typically five days long. Now, they are more flexible to fit the project being studied. MoDOT has five types of VE studies:

Conceptual Stage VE - the focus is to come up with many alternates. The goal is to choose the best alternate to accomplish project purpose and need. Length of study: three to five days

Preliminary Stage VE - this is the traditional VE study conducted prior to preliminary plan submittal. The focus here is usually on improving the existing design, often by this stage, the footprint is usually set and it may be too late for major functional enhancements. Length of study: three to five days

Constructability Review - this type of VE study concentrates on constructability, traffic management, “bidability,” innovative contracting, etc. This can be done at any stage from conceptual to final plans. Length of study: two to four hours up to three to five days

Practical Design Review - this is a quick/short review, which can be conducted at any stage from conceptual to final plans. Length of study: two to four hours up to one to two days

Process Value Analysis - this type of VE study concentrates on process improvement. The goal is to take an innovative and practical look at any of our processes. Subjects could include anything, i.e., maintenance operations, construction standards or purchasing specifications. Length of study: two to four hours up to three to five days

Each of these approaches allow the Value Engineering tool the flexibility to fit the job it needs to address.

for more info

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D1

Northwest

Blueprint at Work

by M. Elaine Justus / photos by Holly Murphy

America is an automotive-based society. For us, it's more than just transportation, and for some, our cars have become our defining identity. That was the case for David and Fay Utesch of Ames, Iowa and their 1996 Torch Red Corvette.



The 1996 Corvette, when it left the factory, had 300 horsepower, weighed 3,298 pounds and was capable of speeds of 175 mph.

On Sept. 27, 2002, this car re-defined their lives in a way they had not anticipated. About 1 a.m., their son Ryan, age 21, without their consent or knowledge, decided to borrow it to take his girlfriend, Krysia, age 18, for a ride. Based upon the crash analysis, it was determined that the car was traveling between 134 and 145 mph when it left the road and flipped end over end before coming to rest on its top near a fence line. Ryan's blood alcohol level was .163, making him legally drunk.

Ryan, who was not wearing a seatbelt, was thrown from the car and found lying about 90 feet from where the vehicle came to rest. Krysia was wearing a seatbelt. She got out of the car and walked to the nearest farm residence for help. Her injuries were minor, while Ryan's were more severe and he died several days later.

To honor Ryan's life and remind others of the dangers of unsafe driving, his parents now make the car available for public display. They also have a presentation involving making choices and what the consequences of those choices would be.

On Dec. 22, the Blueprint for Safety Northwest Regional Coalition cooperated with the St. Joseph Youth Alliance to bring this car to St. Joseph. We placed it at the busiest intersection in St. Joseph, and it received a lot of attention. Even District Engineer Don Wichern used it to educate his daughter who is a young driver. "We were just driving by, and my daughter asked what that was. I do not believe she thought such a beautiful car could be so completely destroyed or that someone wearing a seatbelt could survive and walk away."



The wreckage displayed at the busiest intersection in St. Joseph was so severely damaged that it could not be recognized as a Corvette.

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Future Drivers

by M. Elaine Justus / photos by Officer Todd Smith

"School crossing guards are great kids," according to Officer Todd Smith of the St. Joseph Police Department. He should know, since he works closely with them all year. As the person responsible to recruit, train and motivate these young people, Officer Smith often faces some significant challenges, not the least of which is funding.

Each year, he tries to sponsor an event to bring all 165 of them together to celebrate and educate. Arrive Alive was a perfect fit. The Educational sub-committee of the Northwest Regional Blueprint Coalition found this to be an excellent way to share the important knowledge about driving safely, unimpaired and buckled up.



Arrive Alive was the topic of the day for 165 school crossing guards. They came together on Dec. 22 because the St. Joseph Police Department and the Northwest Regional Blueprint Coalition made it happen.

Public Meeting - Rulo Bridge

by M. Elaine Justus / photos provided by NDOR

The bridge over the Missouri River on U.S. Highway 159 is 70-years old. Completed in 1939, it was designed and built in a time when vehicles were fewer and smaller. Both Missouri and Nebraska agree that it has been a good bridge, but it is now classified as "functionally obsolete" and warrants replacement.

Nebraska serves as the lead state on all issues regarding the bridge. On Dec. 2, 2008, they hosted an open house and public hearing at the Camp Rulo River Club to bring the public up-to-date on current schedules and designs. The project currently calls for the two-year construction phase to begin in early 2011, and is estimated to cost about \$32 million.

Because the bridge connects the two states, Nebraska and Missouri will share in the construction and maintenance expenses. Efforts to secure funding have been complicated, but Nebraska and Missouri have confirmed that they will be able to supply their respective shares of the funding. The plans call for the existing bridge to remain open to traffic during construction to minimize the impact to users. The right-of-way process is expected to begin in late 2009 and continue through 2010.

The bridge, itself, is a movie star. It was featured in the 1973 Peter Bogdanovich movie, "Paper Moon," which starred Ryan O'Neal, his daughter Tatum O'Neal and Madeline Kahn. The majority of the film was shot in and around the St. Joseph area.



More than 200 people attended the open house and public hearing on Dec. 2, 2008 regarding the proposed new Missouri River bridge on U.S. Highway 159 at Rulo. The Camp Rulo River Club was the site of the meeting.

D2

North Central

District 2 Working More Safely Than Ever Before

by Tammy Wallace

Every MoDOT employee knows the value of working safely. From day one on the job all employees, particularly those in safety-sensitive positions,

receive a myriad of safety training and it is revisited regularly as employees move through their careers. It is no secret that a very large percentage of our employees are in positions that require a diligence to safety every day, and we take safety very seriously.

MoDOT examines how we are doing with our safety practices through our TRACKER measures. District 2 is very proud of one of these measures for calendar year 2008 – Rate and Total of OSHA Recordable Incidents. District 2 had the lowest number of recordable



Regional Maintenance Crew Leader Jerry Steele shows Regional Maintenance Bridge Worker Rusty Reed how to safely operate equipment on the boom truck.

Employees Begin New Year Healthier and 405 Pounds Lighter!

by Tammy Wallace

Last September, 55 employees joined the district's 16 Week Health & Fitness Challenge. The challenge encouraged employees to begin a healthier lifestyle through diet and exercise.



Credit Union Manager Kay Lucas congratulates Gale on his success at the final weigh in. Later that day it was announced that Gale had won the competition.

A fun side to the challenge was a competition. Participants paid a \$20 fee, knowing the money collected would go to the top two competitors and a contribution would be made to the District's employee fund. In January, organizers of the challenge announced the final results.

Top honors went to Gale March, senior highway designer who took first place, and Sam Hartung, senior highway technician took second. Gale and Sam lost the most weight of the participants.

Not only are Gale and Sam starting out 2009 healthier, their diligence won both of them some cold hard cash - \$550 and \$385, respectively.

These top two were certainly not alone. Eight more winners round out the top 10: Erin Gruber, Bryan Moots, Earl Keune, Preston Kramer, Larry Amidei, Ellen Gehringer, David Gipson and Tracy Little. Winners were determined by the largest percentage of the total weight loss.

These Top 10 did very well and they deserve a big pat on the back. How-

ever, we don't want to forget the other

45 participants who hung in there for the 16 weeks. Total weight lost amongst all the 55 participants was a whopping 405.8 pounds!

So what's the first thing you want to do when you've been counting calories for 16 weeks – go out to eat of course. District Engineer Dan Niec treated participants from the Design department to a healthy meal at Subway for being the work unit with the highest percentage of weight loss.

Not only is the District proud to have the lowest number of recorded incidents; but the steady reduction over the past few years is also impressive. In 2008 recorded incidents dropped to 10, down more than half from 21 incidents in 2005.



Health & Fitness Challenge Top 10. Front row from left - Ellen Gehringer, Erin Gruber, Tracy Little, Earl Keune and Gale March. Back row - Sam Hartung, Bryan Moots, David Gipson, Preston Kramer and Larry Amidei.

So what's the first thing you want to do when you've been counting calories for 16 weeks – go out to eat of course. District Engineer Dan Niec treated participants from the Design department to a healthy meal at Subway for being the work unit with the highest percentage of weight loss.

day, much lower than previous years.

Lost Time	Lost Workdays
2005 - 07	2005 - 57
2006 - 03	2006 - 24
2007 - 03	2007 - 04
2008 - 01	2008 - 01

"The trend on all of these measures relating to employee incidents are going down dramatically," said Health & Safety Manager Shari Dye. "The employees are doing a great job and we just need to keep up the good work."

One very good incentive for Lost Time incidents is that Director Pete Rahn said he would give an entire District the day off if they could go 24 months without one lost time incident. Our countdown began last February so we're a year in. We all need to work safely, and this type of incentive certainly can't hurt.

Supervisors Talk Leadership

by Tammy Wallace

The agenda for the December quarterly supervisor meeting had a little different twist. Along with the usual information sharing through presentations and open discussions, employees also participated in small group exercises.

Those exercises centered around three questions. 1) What makes you a good supervisor? 2) What are your employees expectations of you as a supervisor? 3) What are your expectations of your supervisor?

A representative from each group presented a summary of their

table's discussion on the topics to the entire audience. It was interesting to see the similarities and differences amongst the groups.

The questions were designed to get supervisors thinking about their role as leaders in the district, and to share those ideas to learn from one another.



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D3

Northeast

Two Roles Become One

In alignment with MoDOT values, a modification in job roles has allowed the NE District to be “one team” and be flexible to its employees.

Mike Baxter, former utilities engineer for the district, accepted the role as assistant district construction and materials engineer. Jim Zeiger, utilities liaison engineer, had been telecommuting from the NE District two days each week.

“As our projects shift to more taking care of the system, we foresee the responsibility and role of the utilities engineer shifting, so we asked Jim if he would accept the challenge of continuing to perform his Central Office duties and accept the role of district utilities engineer,” said Assistant District Engineer Dave Silvester.



Jim Zeiger is combining his central office work in utilities with the district utilities engineer role. He is pictured with former Utilities Engineer Mike Baxter.

Jim accepted the challenge and is looking forward to learning more about the mechanics of the district utilities engineer role. “Utilizing one person to handle both roles will promote one team and provides Jim the opportunity to understand more aspects of utilities,” Dave said.

“With Mike’s assistance, this change will help give me perspective on an everyday look at how our policies impact what actually goes on in the field,” Jim said.

Smiling at Utility Costs?

Despite the increasing cost of utilities, MoDOT employees continue to make headway on reducing expenses in the area of utilities. Last year, District management challenged the District to reduce utility expenses by an average of 10 percent per month. The end result has been a \$13,804 overall decrease.

8 “Considering the increase in utility costs, we are very pleased with the results,” said Business and Benefits Manager Sherri McGregor. “We tracked costs last year due to inaccessibility of usage data, but this year, we will be tracking usage to give us more accurate information.”

Out of 35 work units, 18 showed a decrease in expenses. On the monthly report, Sherri recognized the decreases with a yellow “smiley face,” making it a popular reference point for the utility challenge. “It is evident our employees are making efforts to conserve and be green,” Sherri said.

As a result of their efforts, the top three work units, about 25 employees, are being recognized. In addition, the area that had the highest reduction in their monthly average expense, received a trophy. “If we’re not using it, we shut it



off,” said Becky Novinger, supervisor at Shelbyville Maintenance, the second place winner.

Dion Thurman, supervisor at the number one work unit, New Florence Maintenance, recommends regular reminders. “Really, everyone embraced the effort, realizing it’s the right thing to do,” he said. Bowling Green Maintenance was the third place winner of the challenge, and Maintenance Superintendent Kenny Holcher’s area was the trophy winner.

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LET’S TALK

Capitalizing on the “Conversation” initiative, the NE District used “Let’s Talk” as the theme for its annual update to legislators and media held throughout the month of January.



NE District Engineer Paula Gough initiates a conversation with members of the legislature and media during the annual update meeting.

Discussing partnering, results and the future, the update provided the audience a recap of accomplishments in 2008 and plans for 2009.

- In 2008...**
- Worked with area communities to manage flooded roads and bridges
 - Completed/opened the final four lane sections of the Avenue of the Saints
 - Highest ever customer satisfaction rating
 - Initiated Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Program
 - Worked with counties, cities, businesses to improve transportation
 - Completed/opened an 11 mile section of the US 36 four lane project
 - Contributed to the reduction of fatalities on Missouri roads
- In 2009...**
- Begin construction on an interchange at US 61/Route U in Moscow Mills
 - Survey, then begin design of the Hannibal Expressway
 - Complete US 36 four lanes between Monroe City and Macon
 - Work with safety partners to amend the seat belt law
 - Complete the environmental impact study for the Route 47 Bridge at Washington

Project Team Delivers on Partnership

Everyone knows Missourians want a transportation project to be better, faster and cheaper. In fact, they want it NOW! After several months of negotiation, MoDOT secured a cost-share partnership with Crossroads Development to design and construct an interchange to improve safety in southern Lincoln County at US 61 and Route U.

A partnership isn’t necessarily unusual, but accelerating the design of a \$14 million interchange project in less than a few months proves that MoDOT engineers and staff have the motivation and expertise to do it. “We realized our schedule was aggressive, so we worked closely with the developer’s consultant on the design,” explained Transportation Project Manager Chris Knapp. Design of the interchange began before the cost-share agreement was executed in April

2008, and the project was let Jan. 23. Other than the timeframe for deadlines, Kim Trainor, who was the lead designer on the project, said probably the biggest design challenge was combining the consultant and MoDOT design. “We had to integrate the practical design concept without jeopardizing the terms of the cost-share agreement,” she explained. “This was definitely a team effort,” Chris said. Working as one team was necessary to accommodate the schedule. The survey crew, Right of Way department, and utilities engineer were also very involved from the initial scoping phase. “We also appreciate the efforts of Central Office’s Resource Management, Bridge, Design and Chief Counsel’s staff to help us with the terms of the cost-share agreement processes,” Chris said.



MoDOT NE District staff are cheering that the US 61 and Route U interchange design met deadlines and was successfully let in January. Pictured are Steve Dickson, survey, Holly Thronsdon, right of way, Chris Knapp, project manager, Brian Untiedt, maintenance and traffic, Kim Trainor, design, Andy Long, design, Shawn Parrish, design, Nathan Briggs, right of way, and Laurie Travis, design. Not pictured are Mike Baxter, utilities, Toshia Drebes, design and Tony Weichhaus, retiree from design.

D4

Kansas City Area

Ribbons of Celebration

by Kerri Lewis

With 2008 behind us, it is time to look forward to 2009. 2008 proved to be a busy construction season with several projects that have enhanced our transportation system coming to a close and more under way. District 4 celebrated these accomplishments with many ribbon-cutting celebrations and groundbreakings to signify the work and collaboration among MoDOT, city and county officials and community members.

The first ribbon cutting on Aug. 11 celebrated the completion of the new Pryor Road interchange located just north of the Route 50 and Interstate 470 interchange. In a partnership effort between MoDOT and the city of Lee's Summit, the new interchange opened to traffic Aug. 15.

"We listened to citizens who stated a need for this project. We are pleased to work with the city of Lee's Summit to open this interchange that will allow motorists to move through this area safer and with more ease. It also allows businesses to continue to expand along this corridor," said Elizabeth Wright, district engineer.

In a second ribbon-cutting celebration, MoDOT signified the completion of safety improvements at the intersection of Route 92 and Commercial Street in Smithville on time

and within budget. Smithville's first, new roundabout opened to traffic on Aug. 18.

"MoDOT's first priority is safety, and building a roundabout is an innovative way for creating a safer intersection. This great alternative to a signalized intersection means motorists will find a quicker, safer and more economical route to reach their destination," said Wright.

In yet another ribbon cutting, MoDOT celebrated the completion of the Noland Road Bridge on Sept. 25. An aging Noland Road Bridge over Interstate 70 was removed Feb. 16, and in less than two months, a new bridge was in place and carrying traffic. Ramp replacement, landscaping and other off-roadway construction continued throughout the summer. The Independence community and



A group of MoDOT, city and county officials stand proudly in front of the new Noland Road Bridge.

MoDOT celebrated the completion of this \$9.3 million project with a ribbon cutting.

"This bridge is a winner for tens of thousands of motorists each day because MoDOT and the citizens of Independence are part of a great team. Together we tackled a project that could have cost \$33 million and might have taken more than a year to re-



A group of eager elementary students hold up a piece of the blue ribbon after the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new roundabout near their school in Smithville.

The new Route 150 bridge will keep traffic flowing through Greenwood.

open. However, we were able to build it for \$9.3 million and got it open in less than two months," said Chris Redline, assistant district engineer.

On the south side of District 4, more projects were completed and ribbon cuttings were held. Representatives from the village of Loch Lloyd, the city of Belton and MoDOT celebrated



Crews closed Route D to quickly resurface the road for motorists before the ribbon cutting in July.

another major project completion by cutting the ribbon in late September to reopen Route D, concluding weeks of closure for the vital state highway through Cass County. MoDOT's improvements to Route D have provided a smoother, long-lasting highway that doesn't demand continual maintenance.

Route D was closed to all through traffic from Route 58 in Cass County to Route 150 in south Kansas City beginning July 29, with only local access for property owners. Using the old concrete pavement as a stabilized base, geotextile was placed on top of the base and a five-inch-thick layer of concrete poured over the old highway surface. Access to Loch Lloyd was provided from the north during the first phase, and then switched to the newly constructed pavement on the south side. The middle phase from just north of Loch Lloyd to near 164th Street concluded before Labor Day, with a left turn lane added at 165th Street. The third phase, reconstructing the pavement from about 164th Street north to Route 150, included a left-turn lane at Kenneth Road.

The new Route 150 Bridge over Big Creek in Greenwood officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in early October. The replacement of a structurally deficient, functionally obsolete and substandard bridge over the Big Creek and Union Pacific Railroad was designed after the public's input convinced MoDOT to keep at least one lane open through Greenwood during construction. For several months last summer, one-lane, signal-controlled traffic moved slowly across half of the old bridge while the new bridge was being built. The staged construction ensured that businesses continued to draw customers and the two sides of the community would



Steve Porter

not be isolated. Work began in March 2007.

"Keeping the highway open ensured customer access to merchants in Greenwood who rely on outside shoppers looking for the many unique items offered in their shops," said Sharon Taegel, assistant to the district engineer. "Greenwood's financial vitality depends on the success of the businesses flanking Route 150."

With so many projects celebrating completion, District 4 crews remained busy preparing for more projects to get under way. Groundbreakings for the Route 150 project and the North Cass Parkway celebrated project kick-off.

During a ceremony in September, representatives from Grandview, Kansas City and Lee's Summit joined MoDOT near the northeast corner of Route 71 and Route 150 to break ground on two significant roadway projects for the area. Work on the interchange of Route 71 at Route 150 and the widening of Route 150 from Route 71 to Route 291 is officially under way.

Also in September, a groundbreaking ceremony was held to signify the beginning for a new \$10.1 million North Cass Parkway interchange near 187th Street and Route 71, and the \$13.5 million project to redesign the interchange at 163rd Street. The cities of Belton and Raymore are teaming up with Cass County and MoDOT



Steve Porter

The groundbreaking for the new North Cass Parkway interchange near 187th Street and Route 71.

to build North Cass Parkway interchange two miles south of Route 58 on Route 71. The city of Belton is providing substantial financial support to reconstruct the 163rd Street (Route Y) interchange a mile north of Route 58 on Route 71.

After so many projects completed and others just beginning in 2008, District 4 definitely had a reason to celebrate. And with a new year under way, there are many more projects on the horizon to keep the ribbons flying.

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D5

Central

Low-Water Crossings Receive 'Green' Improvements

by Holly Dentner

Three low-water crossings in Camden County will soon be safer, less likely to flood and potentially beneficial to a federally threatened fish species.

The improvements are a result of MoDOT's efforts to mitigate the environmental impacts of recent Camden County construction projects. One low-water crossing, over Griswald's Slab on County Road N-145, is already rebuilt and open to traffic. Green's Slab on County Road N-166R is nearly complete and scheduled to open in early 2009, weather permitting. The third crossing, at Howard's Ford on County

Road NN-166, is still under construction and scheduled to reopen in 2009. All three routes cross the Little Niangua River.

The low-water crossings are being modified to allow for increased water flow and to improve fish migration, partic-



Work continues on the Howard's Ford crossing, which is scheduled to reopen in early 2009.



Melissa Scheperle

ularly for a federally threatened species called the Niangua Darter.

"Low-water crossings on Missouri county roads can limit aquatic organism movement because they create barriers for fish moving downstream," said Melissa Scheperle, enior environmental specialist. "Modifying these structures enables fish populations to reconnect, increasing opportunity for genetic diversity and boosting population growth."

The new crossings will reduce maintenance needs and expenses. All three are

also designed to decrease the frequency and duration of flooding.

"These low-water crossings are on county roads, but the economic and environmental benefit makes them ideal for MoDOT to help meet our federal requirements for our construction projects in Camden County," said Nicole Hood, project manager. "Our standard mitigation efforts usually include planting trees or stabilizing nearby stream banks, so this project really stands out as a way to improve the transportation system and provide a great benefit to the area's natural habitat and wildlife."

Construction includes removing and replacing 60 feet of each of the existing low-water crossings where the water flow is the greatest. Griswald's Slab has been raised one foot and Green's Slab will be raised two feet. Howard's Ford will remain at the same elevation. The new crossings will be 17 feet wide, which is three feet wider than the existing crossings.



Water flowed over Green Slab before construction. Work is almost finished on the new crossing.



Melissa Scheperle

Motor Oil Keeps Boonville Warm This Winter

by Holly Dentner

We all want efficient and inexpensive ways to heat our homes, especially as energy costs continue to rise. MoDOT wants to operate in the same way, looking for creative ways to be environmentally responsible and cost effective.

The latest attempt at the Central District has employees at the Boonville maintenance building stockpiling used motor oil. A newly installed furnace uses the oil to heat the building, which not only saves money on heating costs, but helps MoDOT stay "green" by recycling one of our existing resources.

"Last year we paid about \$2 per gallon for propane gas, which equaled \$6,000 just to heat the building," said Kerry Thompson, Maintenance superintendent. "By using motor oil we already have, this new furnace should pay for itself in a matter of a year or two."

Even though the department can sell its used motor oil, that price can fluctu-

ate. Re-using the motor oil for our own purposes, especially when it replaces something as expensive as propane gas, still makes for a cost effective solution.

"These oil-burning furnaces do need a little more maintenance," said Thompson. "The biggest change is collecting the oil and filtering it through a screen before it goes into the tank."

The cost savings and environmental benefit make the prospect of additional furnaces around the district a real possibility.

"The maintenance building in Warsaw has been using a furnace that can burn motor oil for quite a while," said Coleen Welter, General Services manager. "For certain buildings this can be an ideal solution and we'll continue evaluating what other buildings might benefit from it."



The new crossing at Griswald's Slab is one foot higher and three feet wider than the original.



Melissa Scheperle

New Faces in Customer Service

Those new voices you'll hear when you dial 888-ASK-MODOT are the Central District's newest additions to the customer service team.

Charlett Scott and Amanda Gabris started on Jan. 5, and their primary duties will include answering district and central office phones, greeting walk-in customers, handling e-mailed requests and helping with public events.

Charlett came to MoDOT after working as a patient representative at the Green Meadows Pediatric Clinic in Columbia. She also worked at University Hospital as a radiology clerk and has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

Amanda came to MoDOT after moving to Jefferson City from O'Fallon. She previously worked at Anheuser-Busch, giving VIP tours of the brewery. Amanda also interned at Disney World in Florida while working on her bachelor's degree in psychology.



Kristin Gerber

Central District's Customer Service Team includes Alicia Redes, Jennifer Ranabargar (top row), Amanda Gabris and Charlett Scott (bottom row).

Charlett and Amanda have joined customer service representatives Jennifer Ranabargar and Alicia Redes. In 2008, the District 5 customer service center received more than 46,000 phone calls.

10

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D6

St. Louis Area

Maintenance Employees Recognized for “High Achiever” Teamwork

by Kara Price

Over a seven-week period (Oct. 8 until Nov. 24, 2008), six Gray Summit building employees demonstrated “High Achiever” teamwork in conjunction with MoDOT’s Values and Tangible Results.

The employees recognized for their “High Achiever” teamwork include:

- Duane Whiteman, Gray Summit Maintenance supervisor
- Todd Dettling, senior Maintenance worker
- Jacob Heitmann, intermediate Maintenance worker
- Don Moore, intermediate Maintenance worker
- Chris Barnwell, Maintenance worker
- Rose Eye, Maintenance worker

They worked unpredictable schedules to successfully install and manage traffic control for I-44 lane closures, which produced safe and cost effective work zones.

These employees had to be flexible to install and manage these work zones. To ensure uninterrupted traffic flow, their working hours varied greatly to accommodate the type, duration and the direction of the work being accomplished.

This work also required a high degree of teamwork. These employees coordinated with contractors, MODOT construction staff, other maintenance personnel and the District 6 TMC to ensure consistent communication.



Gray Summit Maintenance Building employees are recognized by their supervisor in early January for demonstrating “High Achiever” Teamwork.

MoDOT had an extremely large amount of pavement repair and asphalt work under the “on call” contracts in Fall 2008. This work was necessary to ensure the smooth and unrestricted roads and bridges in Franklin County along Interstate 44. These six employees truly volunteered to provide traffic control for these contracts to ensure MoDOT provided the best value for every dollar.

“I am proud of the employees at the Gray Summit Maintenance Building for their hard work in fulfilling MoDOT’s Values and Tangible Results,” said Rick Schneider, Maintenance superintendent for Franklin County. “They showed excellent teamwork and how it brings success to an important project.”

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I-64 Closure Command Center Monitors Traffic

by Linda Wilson



Engineers from MoDOT, St. Louis County and St. Louis City partnered as an Arterials team to help monitor traffic patterns and travel times on alternate routes.

For the second straight year, St. Louis motorists smoothly and quickly adjusted to changing traffic patterns with the second phase closure of the Interstate 64 project. On Dec. 13, the east half of Interstate 64 from Interstate 170 to Kingshighway Blvd. was closed for reconstruction. Following the Dec. 14 opening ceremony of the west half, all lanes of the newly rebuilt I-64 from Interstate 270 to I-170 were open to traffic for its first Monday morning rush.

Monitoring the new traffic patterns was the award winning I-64 Closure Command Team. Engineers from MoDOT, St. Louis County and St. Louis City along with law enforcement from the Missouri State Highway Patrol and St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department worked together based out of MoDOT’s Hampton Project Office in the city of St. Louis.

More than 100 others were on the streets driving alternate routes and watching major intersections. Travel times were recorded on several dozen roads from 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. every weekday.

“We have successfully closed two sections of I-64 because we proactively managed the traffic with a multi-agency team,” said District Engineer Ed Hassinger. “We developed a plan, worked through issues and stayed ahead of the problems. I’m very proud of the hard work from everyone involved.”

By mid-January, traffic patterns and travel times had stabilized on all the alternate routes and the Closure Team reduced its efforts to weekly monitoring. The team will continue to monitor traffic and meet twice monthly to give reports to the public until the highway reopens by Dec. 31, 2009.



MoDOT, along with St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department and Missouri State Highway Patrol, addressed the media at a news conference held twice a day within the first week of the second phase closure. At the news conferences, they provide updated information on traffic patterns along alternate routes. Not pictured: Representatives from the St. Louis City Streets Department and St. Louis County Departments of Highways, Traffic and Public Works.

D7

Southwest

Quick Action Recognized

by Lori Marble



District Engineer Becky Baltz offers her appreciation, and that of the Department, to Maintenance Supervisor Francis Abramovitz.

The Southwest District's Cassville Maintenance group was called together under the idea that a supervisory meeting was "in order." Temperatures outside on that bright January day were in the 50s and the sun was shining like it was the middle of summer. The assembled group had almost forgotten the snowy and ice-filled roads of December.

Now grouped together in the small break room were the gentle giants of Maintenance, folks motorists know they can depend on through thick and thin. One of District 7's heroes is Francis Abramovitz, Cassville regional Maintenance supervisor, who earlier this winter came to the rescue of a stranded motorist during a snow/sleet storm.

Abramovitz gave this personal account of the event: "I was on highway 90 sanding the road ... when I came upon a pickup turned over on its top in the ditch in the westbound lane. I stopped and crossed the road to check out the vehicle and saw someone was inside. I went around to the other side and there was a lady hanging upside down in her seat belt. She was screaming for me to get her out, and I crawled partway

inside and cut the seatbelt and shoulder straps with my pocketknife and let her down. ... I stayed with the lady until an ambulance arrived. She told me when we were waiting that she had moved here from Arizona in August of this year and had never driven on ice or snow before."

Fortunately for the driver, she had chosen to buckle up. She was left with only some bruises and a few sore muscles.

District Engineer Becky Baltz presented Abramovitz with the Department's Certificate of Appreciation for coming to the aid of a stranded motorist.

"As a government agency, we're trying to make a profit," commented Baltz. "Our profit is the goodwill we gain from the traveling public. It's efforts such as this that helps us build the trust of those we serve each day."

In accepting the framed certificate, Abramovitz was humble, as always, putting his crew before himself.

"Any one of these guys in here would have done the same thing," he said. "Their names should be on here as well."

Aldridge Retires After 36 Years

Transportation Project Designer Joe Aldridge ended 2008 by retiring after 36 years.



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Officially marking the completion of the Monett Route 60 project are (left to right) Commissioner Jim Anderson, Sen. Jack Goodman, Monett Mayor Jim Orr, District Engineer Becky Baltz and Monett TIF Chairman Mark Nelson.

Partnering Pays Off for Community

by Lori Marble

One of the Southwest Districts most frequent and strongest cost share partner is the community of Monett, even funding one recent project as a 90-10 split, (Monett 90 – MoDOT 10). Since 1997, the city of Monett has participated in five cost-share projects and invested \$8.3 million to address needs on the state system. On Dec. 18, a ribbon-cutting celebration was held



A new bridge stretches over the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad.

commemorating the District's largest cost-share project to date, not surprisingly in Monett.

Monett utilized bonding and tax increment financing to fund its share of the project costs. TIF is a financing tool that allows future property taxes generated by new development to pay for the costs of constructing public infrastructure.

The project expanded US 60 to four lanes (part) and five lanes (part) from MO 37 to east of Bridal Lane, built a new companion bridge over the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad, improved existing intersections and supplied new local frontage and backage roads.

This \$9.3 million project was desired to improve safety, traffic flow and access management for the community of just more than 8,000 residents. The cost included engineering, utility relocation and construction and was a 50 percent match from the city of Monett, with 50 percent from MoDOT's state-wide cost-share fund

According to Scott Bachman, planning manager, there are many benefits of partnering and acceleration of projects such as these. "When we work together,

er, we find we can meet community needs much sooner than with traditional funding sources," he said. "The improvement costs are greatly reduced for MoDOT, meaning we can complete more projects with limited funding."

Noting that the highway before improvements had been handling 15,000 vehicles a day, District Engineer Becky Baltz, in opening the ceremony, applauded the community's efforts and patience in working toward improved transportation.

"Together we've been able to expand US 60 to four lanes and five lanes, from MO 37 to Bridal Lane ... All this – while still allowing traffic to move into and out of Monett throughout the course of this project, helping you continue to grow and expand as a community," Baltz said.

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioner Jim Anderson was on hand for the ceremony and commended the Monett community. "Successful communities invest in basic infrastructure," he said.

32 Years Under His Belt



Lamar Maintenance Supervisor Dan Caruthers retired in December.

D8

Springfield Area



Bob Edwards

Springfield Area Resident Engineer Johnny Teegardin explains the I-44/Glenstone/Route H project in Springfield during a public meeting.

Two Interchanges Along I-44 in Springfield Being Rebuilt

by Bob Edwards

Two busy crossroads along Interstate 44 on Springfield's north side are getting an extreme makeover.

Early in January, construction began on the first-in-the-USA Diverging Diamond Interchange at Kansas Expressway and I-44, adopting a design that works well in Europe.

Also under way three miles to the east is reconstruction of the I-44/Glenstone Avenue interchange. This involves replacing both bridges and converting from a cloverleaf to a diamond design.

I-44/Kansas Expressway (Route 13)

With a Diverging Diamond Interchange, or DDI, the opposing lanes of Kansas Expressway will criss-cross at signals at the ends of the bridge over I-44. Crossing the bridge, oncoming traffic will be on the right, separated by concrete barriers and screening. This will give left-turners a "free left" onto I-44 and improve flow for through traffic.

During construction, two southbound lanes and one northbound lane of Kansas Expressway will remain open. Additional lane closings must be at night. The bridge over I-44 will be closed the final weekend for last-minute work before the DDI is opened.

Extra effort will be made to alert drivers to disruptions, Springfield Resident Engineer Johnny Teegardin said: "We're trying to take every precaution." That includes setting work zone signs for southbound traffic further north than would be typical because vehicles already stack up beyond a curve.

Springfield is a partner in the project.

Completion is scheduled for July 10. Prime contractor is Hartman and Co. Construction of Springfield.

I-44/Glenstone Avenue/Route H

A last-minute change in construction staging was approved, based on business owners' concerns about the westbound-to-southbound ramp being closed during the project. Those concerns surfaced in a public meeting as the project was about to begin. The meeting drew 130 people.

"We sat down and took another look at it and determined we could reverse the stages and still handle traffic and better serve (more of) the businesses," said Project Manager Chad Zickefoose.

Both bridges over I-44 will be torn down one at a time – one in February and the other in late summer. During each demolition, I-44 will be closed for an 18-hour period. Many MoDOT workers, law enforcement, Civil Air Patrol and others will team up to manage detours and respond to incidents.

During new bridge construction, Glenstone Avenue traffic will be reduced to one lane in each direction on one bridge as the other is being built.

The project includes three-laning Greene County Route H to Valley Water Mill Road, using city of Springfield and Greene County funds.

Prime contractor on the \$8.3-million project is Emery Sapp and Sons, Columbia, with completion July 1, 2010.



Bob Edwards

D8 at Work

As part of the district's systematic warning-sign replacement program, Gainesville Senior Maintenance Worker Les Snorgrass (top photo) attaches a new speed plaque to a post on Ozark County Route OO near Ocie.

Flinging dirt during a ceremonial groundbreaking (bottom photo) for the I-44/Kansas Expressway Diverging Diamond Interchange project is Sen. Norma Champion, center. She is joined by, from left, owner Dean Hartman and foreman Billy Shrock of Hartman and Co. Construction, Springfield City Manager Greg Burris, District Engineer Kirk Juranas, Rep. Shane Schoeller, City Public Works Director Marc Thornsberry and City Councilman Denny Whayne. Others participating: Reps. Charlie Norr and Bob Dixon and City Councilman Ralph Manley. Work began in early January.

February Retirees

by Angela Eden

Bolivar Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Breesawitz

Service: 24 years (Hired Feb. 1, 1985)

Career: Maintenance worker to intermediate maintenance worker, Halfway Maintenance, 1985-1999; senior maintenance worker to maintenance supervisor, Bolivar Maintenance, 1999-2009

Biggest Change: Equipment is better and safer

Quote: "I've enjoyed it all," from plowing snow to general road maintenance.

Post-MoDOT Plans: Spending more time with wife, Donna, and their six grandchildren; taking care of cattle on the family's farm

Community Relations Senior Office Assistant Sandra Floyd

Service: 12 years (Hired Dec. 1, 1996)

Career: Secretary, 1996-1997; senior secretary, 1997-1999; intermediate clerk, 1999-2000; senior office assistant, 2005-2009 – all Community Relations



Breesawitz



Floyd

Biggest Challenge: Moving the overdimension permit process from manual to a computer automated system and making sure MoDOT's customers were taken care of during the process.

Quote: "I've enjoyed helping people. They want to see a friendly, helpful human being when they walk in our front door."

Post-MoDOT Plans: Spending more time with family, especially her three grandchildren; working in her flower gardens and yard.

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D9

South Central

D9 Launches Work Life Center

When the concept of a Work Life Center was declared a best practice, South Central District Engineer Tom Stehn looked to his employee benefits group and asked that a form of this resource be established. Challenges unique to the District had to be considered and after several months of planning, the South Central District Work Life Center officially launched in January.

The purpose of the Work Life Center is to promote greater understanding and increase support for employees and their families with relationship to available benefits. Due to the District's geography – 13 rural counties – a practical, accessible solution was necessary.

The group decided first to pursue an online resource for information and second to utilize the network of informal mentors already being looked to by new and existing employees.

The online resource is a Wiki, or a constantly evolving web-based information management tool. Each department

involved in the Work Life Center contributes forms, guidelines, links to Web pages, documents or other information employees routinely use and everything can be updated instantly.

Step two quickly followed. It was realized there are employees in every building and office that are looked to by their peers for answers to common and sometimes not so common questions. By taking steps to provide these individuals with timely, useful information, they instantly become greater resources both to employees and management. Training was held in mid-January to help these individuals understand their roles, introduce them to the Wiki and get feedback on what tools they need to be more effective, not just as mentors, but also as employees.

Still early in the process, Stehn is excited about the opportunities this approach to a Work Life Center will open up in terms of making sure employees have good information available to them.

Quick Response on Interstate Leads to Safety Recognition for St. James Employees

Incidents occur somewhere on Interstate 44 most every day. For the MoDOT employees who work along the corridor, response is instinctive. On Sept. 9, 2008, When St. James Maintenance Crew Leader Lester "Pug" Henson and Senior Maintenance Worker Brian Adams saw a car veering off an outer road and toward an interstate off ramp, their experience and training kicked in.

As the vehicle passed, Adams and Henson could see the driver was slumped over the wheel and knew he was headed for an impact with interstate traffic. When that impact occurred, it was with the rear axle of a tractor-trailer truck.

Adams and Henson quickly responded by tending to the victim, contacting 911 and clearing the road of debris while providing traffic control in an effort to prevent additional incidents. According to Adams, once they

determined there was no risk of fire or explosion due to fuel spillage, the decision was made not to move the victim. Instead, remembering what he learned in First Aid/CPR training, he supported the victim's head and neck inside the vehicle while Henson continued with traffic control.

Anyone who spends a day on the interstate knows how quickly one situation can cause another. Adams' attention to the victim resulted in comforting him and allowed for gathering of information emergency responders needed to perform their work once they arrived on the scene. Henson's efforts to restore normal traffic flow were instrumental in reducing the risk of secondary accidents.

Both gentlemen were presented with certificates of appreciation for their actions during a recognition event at the St. James Maintenance Facility on Jan. 30.

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Employees Travel to Jefferson City for Recognition by MHTC

Five members of South Central District maintenance traveled to Jefferson City on Jan. 8 to be recognized by the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission for their actions to aid flood victims last spring. Their efforts led to the successful rescue of two citizens, a volunteer firefighter and a Missouri State Highway Patrol trooper.

The gentlemen received meritorious safety recognition for involvement in the actual rescue process. They were: Van Buren Maintenance Supervisor Roger Christensen, Van Buren Senior

Maintenance Workers Joey Dorris and Don Ricker, Van Buren Intermediate Maintenance Worker Gene Swift and Winona Senior Maintenance Worker Tom Osborn. Van Buren Senior Maintenance Worker Rick Hamm and Intermediate Maintenance worker Ryan Freeze received certificates of appreciation for providing traffic control during the same incident.

The story behind the rescue was featured in the January 2009 issue of *Connections*.



Five South Central District Employees, as well as two from the Northeast District, were recognized during the Jan. 8 meeting of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission for going above and beyond to assist flood victims. Pictured at the meeting, front row, from left, were: Van Buren Intermediate Maintenance Crew Worker Gene Swift, Van Buren Maintenance Supervisor Roger Christensen and Keith Golian, Northeast District. Second row: MoDOT Director Pete Rahn, Van Buren Senior Maintenance Crew Workers Joey Dorris and Don Ricker, Winona Senior Maintenance Crew Worker Tom Osborn and Thomas Ragland, Northeast District. Back row: MHTC Commissioner Rudolph E. Farber, MHTC Vice Chairman James B. Anderson, MHTC Chairman Duane S. Michie and MHTC Commissioners Grace M. Nichols, David A. Gach and Mike Kehoe.

D9 Squarely Focused on Primary Safety Belt in '09

The number one priority for the department – amending the seat belt law to allow for primary enforcement– is certainly a focus within the South Central District. Coordinator for the South Central Region of the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety Kelly Martin has been busy spreading the word about the importance of this legislation and getting people on board as partners.

Martin spent January traveling to safety meetings in order to speak face-to-face with employees about the need for primary enforcement. She shared statistics, gave examples and made it easy to

become a primary seat belt partner by providing cards and pens to sign up on the spot.

In addition, she made contacts with civic organizations, scheduled presentations, met with potential new coalition members outside the department and developed plans for further spreading the word.

Martin said employees have been identified as important advocates in the effort to inform the public of the need for this legislation. As a means of maintaining momentum, ARRIVE ALIVE Wednesdays will be observed with small incentives awarded along the way to those who participate. In addition, a special competition will be held that culminates with a management team concert at the February employee appreciation events.



D10

Southeast

Southeast District Reaches Out to Area Youth

21 Southeast Schools Complete Battle of the Belt Challenge

With teen seat belt rates below average in the Southeast District, reaching our youth with the Buckle-Up message continues to be a top priority for the Southeast Coalition for Roadway Safety.

While a statewide survey showed more teens are buckling their seat belts than ever before—62 percent in 2008, compared to 58 percent in 2006—the number is still well below the 76 percent usage rate for all Missourians.

Unfortunately, hundreds of Missouri teens are killed or injured every year in traffic crashes and a large majority of those killed are not wearing a seat belt. To add to this dismal fact, a recent survey showed that teens in Southeast Missouri tend to use their seat belt less than teens in other parts of the state. According to these surveys, only about 40 percent of teens in Dis-

trict 10 are wearing their seat belts—an alarming statistic.

“We continue to have a huge challenge ahead of us in District 10. We have



been, and are continuing to work to reach out to the young people in our communities about the importance of seat belt use,” said Senior Community Relations Specialist Belinda McMurry. “We care about our teens, and we want to see them make good decisions when they get behind the wheel. Battle of the Belt is one of many avenues that our

District and Coalition are utilizing to reach our young people in D10.”

Battle of the Belt is a high school seat belt challenge where students develop their own creative and unique ways of reaching their student bodies and communities with the important life-saving message of Buckling Up to Arrive Alive.

As part of the program, students perform surprise seat belt checks at their high school and produce educational campaigns to reach their student bodies on the importance of seat belt use.

This year, 21 Southeast Schools completed the 2008 Battle of the Belt challenge, sponsored in part by the Southeast Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety. During the challenge, all but two of the 21 schools saw a significant increase in seat belt usage among their student bodies.

D10 Responds to Icy Winter Road Conditions

With the winter months, comes winter weather—ice, to be specific in District 10. The Southeast recently had a shot of icy winter weather, causing many roads to become slick. MoDOT crews across our District went above and beyond to keep roadways as clear and safe as possible for the public. One family was so appreciative of our crews’ work, they stopped to say thank you...

December 23, 2008

“Some [MoDOT] workers were in salt trucks off the road going to Morehouse, Mo., where you turn to go to Highway 60. My daughter and I and my grandson were en route to New Madrid. We turned on that road to go to Highway 60 and almost went in the ditch! The work crew promptly got salt down, but also was so kind in helping us. The MoDOT guys helped me back to the car, as I couldn’t get up hill with my bad knee. I’m sorry that I don’t know who they were, but just wanted to thank them so much for the kindness they showed.”

Thanks,
Peggy Witthoft & Family

D10 Safe & Sound Community Briefings in Full Swing

District 10 has been busy educating the public about the Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Program with community briefings. But prior to each briefing, District 10 visits with the County Commission in each area to discuss the Safe & Sound program and, more specifically, the projects in 2009, such as road closures and alternate routes.

“I’ve been very impressed with the tone of the comments we’ve received during these meetings with the commissioners,” said Project Manager Andy Meyer. “They have been very supportive of the program and what we are trying to accomplish—

particularly the aggressiveness of the schedule.”

Meyer explained that in addition to comments about the project, the commissioners also offer helpful sugges-

tions about others who will be impacted by the projects.

These comments and suggestions help District 10 in planning community briefings and ensuring that the public stays informed.

So far, District 10 is well on its way of meeting the goal to hold eight community briefings by April 2009, with over half of the community briefings completed.



Project Manager Andy Meyer, far left, explains plans regarding one of the Safe & Sound bridges in St. Francois County.



A Butler County property owner, right, has questions for Transportation Project Designer Jeff Wachter regarding detour routes.

year. In order to complete these projects more quickly and in a less expensive manner, most of the work will include road closures for six-week durations.

“I would not say that they welcome the inconvenience of a road closure, but most people seem to be weighing the impacts versus the benefit of the improved bridge,” said Meyer.

Secondly, Meyer said that most of the property owners in these areas have been well aware that each of the bridges in the program needs work, even before the announcement of the Safe & Sound schedule.

With the Safe & Sound program well under way and other projects in Southeast Missouri scheduled to begin in the next several months, the summer will be a busy time for transportation improvements.

“People are getting excited about the amount of work coming up this summer, and that’s a good thing because we’re delivering on our commitments,” said Meyer.

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Connections

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Additional copies are available upon request. Suggestions, questions and comments are always welcome.



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Mission

Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.



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Making It Click for Young Drivers

MoDOT Launches Teen Seat Belt Campaign

by Reeve White

Seat belts still aren't clicking for Missouri teens. A 2008 teen seat belt survey revealed only 62 percent of Missouri teens wear their seat belts regularly. A teen seat belt educational campaign will launch in the spring along with a period of focused law enforcement. Both are aimed at increasing the number of teens that regularly buckle up.

"Teens have a feeling of invincibility," said Leanna Depue, highway safety director. "They think tragedy won't strike them. But it can and it does."

In 2007, 185 people were killed and 17,247 were injured in traffic crashes involving young drivers. In the last three years, nearly eight out of 10 teen vehicle occupants killed in traffic crashes were not wearing their seat belts.

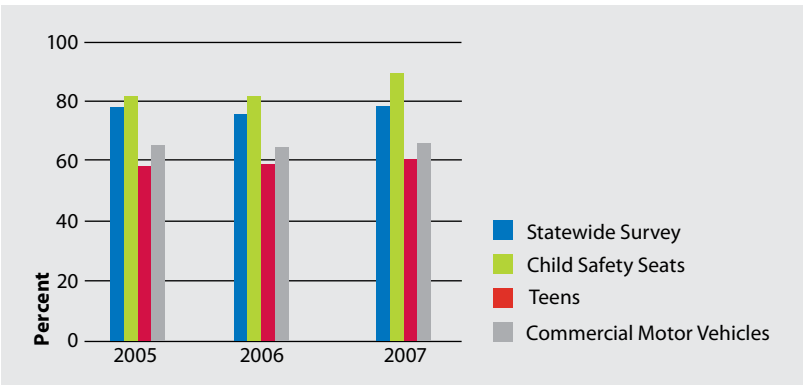


The campaign will deliver the cold, hard – often fatal – facts to the teen population to remind them that seat belts can – and do – save lives.

Advertisements will run the month of March on cable and radio as well as on the Web at popular teen sites.

Young drivers are inexperienced and easily distracted by text messages, friends, radio or other daily tasks. An accident can happen in an instant and take away a young life. The campaign is arming teens with a lifeline – their safety belt.

Safety Belt Use 2005-2007



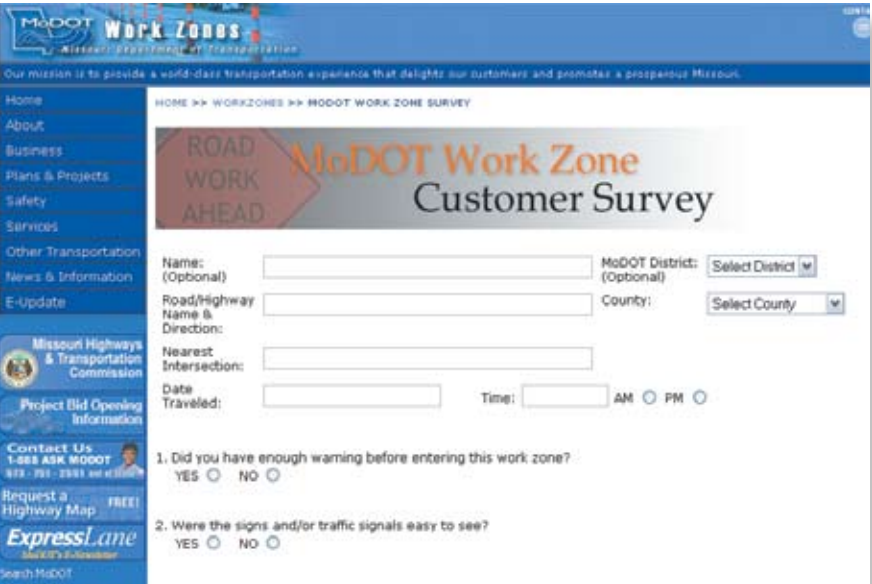
Although safety belt use rates have climbed slowly over the years, nearly 70 percent of people who die in Missouri crashes are still not wearing a safety belt. The number is even higher for teens. Of the teen vehicle occupants who died in crashes between 2005-2007, 80 percent were not wearing safety belts.

Rate MoDOT Work Zones

by Reeve White

Think of the last time you traveled through a work zone. Did you have enough warning that you were approaching a work zone? Were the signs understandable and easy to see?

tion information about the work zone you would like to provide feedback on; however, we welcome feedback with general location information as well. Immediate concerns will be given



For the first time ever, MoDOT is seeking your feedback on our work zones. A new customer survey is available on MoDOT's homepage at www.modot.org that allows you to provide feedback on specific work zones that you have recently traveled.

Public input will provide important feedback on work zone safety, visibility and mobility. Customers will have an opportunity to weigh in on advanced warning, speed limit, timeliness and safety.

"Safety of our workers and the traveling public is our primary concern," said Troy Pinkerton, traffic liaison engineer.

"Knowing our customers expectations helps us provide excellent customer service and will increase the safety of our work zones."

Our Traveler Information Map is a great resource to help you identify more specific loca-

prompt attention and quarterly survey results will be published in the MoDOT TRACKER.

"We want to know if you felt safe while traveling through our work zones," Pinkerton said. "And if you didn't, we want to do everything we can to make sure your next experience feels much safer."

Visit www.modot.org for a current listing of all work zones. Let us know how we're doing so we can keep you and other traveler's safe and moving while we maintain our roads and bridges.



Cathy Morrison